The Contest

Polly Dixon

Anne closed her baton case with finality. She did not like to twirl a baton, she did not like her mother, and most of all she did not like to go to the contest. But Mrs. Allen was becoming impatient. Anne gathered her suitcase, costume, boots, baton case, and records in her arms and hurried downstairs. Mrs. Allen arranged her furs and relieved Anne of part of the load. "Now, darling, don't tire yourself. Be sure to keep warm on the trip. Do we have everything?" asked Mrs. Allen.

"Yes, Mother," said Anne, carefully concealing her disgust. Sixteen years of living with this woman had taught her to hold her tongue. Even Mr. Allen had little to say in the presence of his wife. Anne dearly loved her father; she wished that he were going with them today. Mrs. Allen, however, felt that the contest was strictly a woman's venture, and Mr. Allen agreed with her somewhat half-heartedly.

The trip to Indianapolis was uneventful. Anne and her mother arrived at the Claypool Hotel in time to change clothes and eat dinner. Mrs. Allen arranged for Anne to practice her twirling undisturbed in the basement for two hours. Since anything was better than listening to her mother's incessant chattering all evening, Anne obeyed. The twirling routine she would use in the contest was a difficult one, and it would have to be perfect in order to receive a first division rating. At nine o'clock Mrs. Allen came down for Anne, announcing that it was time for bed. Anne slept soundly while her mother worried about the contest.

In the morning Mrs. Allen chatted gaily as they drove to Butler Fieldhouse. The judging began at nine o'clock, but Anne was not scheduled to perform until twelve after ten. Of course the contest would run late; contests always did. As Anne sat watching the other girls, she considered a possible solution to her problems. If she got a second division rating, she would not have to come to the contest next year. Her mother would be embarrassed beyond recovery. For three years Anne had received a first division rating at the contest. It was becoming tiresome, and Anne wanted to do other things besides practicing her twirling. Even during the summer Mrs. Allen took Anne to Florida for further instruction. Anne realized that it would be easy to end all this. She would drop her baton while she was being judged! Her mother would never suspect that she had done it purposely,

and the judges would be sure to give her a second division rating. It was almost time for Anne's turn. Mrs. Allen took the special record to the judge. Anne, smiling to herself, decided exactly when in her routine she would drop the baton.

At last the dreaded day was over. Mrs. Allen had taken the shock fairly well. When they got into the car, she cried a little, but she soon recovered. Even Anne shed a few tears to make her disappointment seem convincing. Anne had a few pangs of conscience on the way, but they were not very painful.

Mr. Allen looked very serious when he heard that Anne had dropped her baton at the contest. Soon after dinner Mrs. Allen went to bed, and Anne and her father went out for a soda. "Daddy, can I stay home from Florida this summer?" asked Anne.

Mr. Allen nodded his head, winked solemnly ,and said, "I think that that too can be arranged."

A Railroader's Vocabulary

Jack Sleeth

Argot, the picturesque language of shop, factory, and profession, finds some of its most colorful idioms in the language of the railroader. This I say to all those who would champion the claim of the college student to first place in the use of fresh and vigorous metaphors. When I started to work at the railroad shops last summer, I was completely baffled by such slang expressions as the "jerks" and the "hoggers." As time went on and I assumed my place among the workers, I found myself with a new vocabulary, which is known only to railroaders. I finally learned that "jerks" are the men in the shops that dismantle the railroad cars and that "hoggers" are the men that fire the locomotives.

Day by day new expressions became known to me. I learned that a "hoodlum," to a railroad man, is not a rowdy disturber of the peace; it is a work train. I learned that a "donkey" is not an animal but a crane that carries heavy materials from one end of the shop to another. "Wreckers" are the car-men ,having acquired their name from other workers who believe that the car-men do more wrecking of cars than repairing of them. "Grease monkeys" are the men that oil and grease the cars before they are ready to leave the shops. The railroaders have borrowed the slang word of "big brass"